

Mr. Arafat, do not let the dream that you have worked your entire life for crumble in order to quell domestic political concerns. I urge you to choose the path to which you have been committed for nearly a decade, the path of peace.

The people of Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza have suffered through enough violence, torment, and death during the years of struggle for the creation of a Palestinian state. Let us work together to ensure that history does not repeat itself.

The purpose of this bill clearly states that if the Palestinian Authority unilaterally declares a Palestinian state, the United States' provision of resources to the Palestinian Authority would cease immediately.

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Furthermore, the bill would prohibit the expenditure of any funds for the United States to formally recognize a unilaterally declared independent Palestinian state. As long as Mr. Barak and Mr. Arafat are willing to sit down together and encourage a constructive dialogue to resolve the issues that divide their people, the United States will do its part to support them in that endeavor.

Though I hope the terms of this bill will never be realized, I believe it is a strong commentary on how this country, the U.S., feels about the prospects of peace. To that end, I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 5272.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PITTS). The gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) has 17 minutes remaining.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, does the gentleman have any further speakers?

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time; and in closing, I wish to emphasize that this legislation represents a measured and an appropriate response to the very serious threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East posed by the continuing suggestions by Palestinian officials that they may unilaterally declare a Palestinian state. Such a declaration could deal a fatal blow to the peace process and would be a very grave mistake.

Our government makes a very serious mistake if it does not make crystal clear to the Palestinian authorities how we would respond to such a step. It is for that reason that I urge strong support for this measure.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5272, the Peace Through Negotiations Act of 2000, which expresses support for the Middle East peace process and the

need for a negotiated settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This legislation declares that U.S. policy opposes the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state. Should such a unilateral declaration occur, this measure would prohibit all U.S. assistance to the Palestinians except for humanitarian aid, and would encourage other countries and international organizations to join the U.S. in withholding diplomatic recognition of a Palestinian state. Further, this legislation would authorize the President to withhold U.S. contributions to international organizations that recognize a unilaterally declared Palestinian state.

As a co-sponsor of H.R. 4976, similar legislation introduced by my colleague from New York, JERROLD NADLER, I believe it is appropriate for the Congress to underscore the threat posed by the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state. Such a declaration would be a violation of the 1993 Oslo Accords, at which Israel and the Palestinians agreed that the determination of the eventual status of the Palestinian entity—as well as other final status issues—can be made only through agreements by both sides. It is critical for both parties to abide by the agreement to resolve permanent status issues through negotiation, not unilateral action.

Peace talks between the Palestinian Authority and Israel were scheduled to end earlier this month, on September 15, 2000. However, unresolved issues—borders, security, settlements, refugees, and the division of Jerusalem—have prevented the two sides from coming to an agreement. Since the unsuccessful completion of the Camp David negotiations in July 2000, PLO Chairman Arafat has renewed his threats to unilaterally declare a Palestinian state. While Chairman Arafat has backed off from those threats and not set a new deadline, I believe this legislation signifies the extent of Congressional resolve, should Chairman Arafat act to carry out his threat after the 106th Congress adjourns.

In March 1999, both houses of Congress adopted H. Con. Res. 24, non-binding legislation which resolved that “any attempt to establish Palestinian statehood outside the negotiating process will invoke the strongest congressional opposition.” The Peace Through Negotiations Act is a legislatively binding response, but only if a unilateral declaration of statehood is actually made. I believe the U.S. must continue to strongly support Israel and resolutely oppose the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state. Accordingly, I urge my colleagues strong endorsement of this landmark legislation.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5272, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the

Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

MAKING IN ORDER ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2000 MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES AND CALL OF CORRECTIONS CALENDAR

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order at any time on Wednesday, September 27, 2000, for the Speaker to entertain motions to suspend the rules and pass, or adopt, the following measures:

H.R. 1795, National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Engineering Establishment Act;

H.R. 2641, to make technical corrections to Title X of the Energy Policy Act of 1992;

H.R. 2346, to authorize the enforcement of certain Federal Communications Commission regulations regarding use of citizens band radio equipment;

H. Res. 576, supporting efforts to increase childhood cancer awareness, treatment, and research;

S. 1295, to designate the Lance Corporal Harold Gomez Post Office; and

It be in order at any time on Wednesday, September 27, 2000, for the Speaker to direct the Clerk to call the bill on the Corrections Calendar.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

QUALITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ACT OF 2000

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5034) to expand loan forgiveness for teachers, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5034

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Quality Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act of 2000”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Over the next 10 years, a large percentage of teachers will retire, leaving American classrooms, particularly urban and rural classrooms, facing a serious teacher shortage.

(2) The Nation will need 2,000,000 new teachers over the next 10 years. Unfortunately, in the past this need has been met by admitting some unqualified teachers to the classroom.

(3) There is also a chronic shortage of fully certified special education teachers, averaging about 27,000 per year. While the demand is ever present, institutes of higher education are graduating fewer teachers qualified in special education.

(4) High quality teachers are the first vital step in ensuring students receive a high quality education.

(5) Potentially valuable teacher candidates are often lured into different careers by higher compensation.

(6) Moreover, the burdensome paperwork and legal requirements are factors which lead special education teachers to leave the profession. More special education teachers move into the general education realm than vice versa.

(7) High-quality prospective teachers need to be identified and recruited by presenting to them a career that is respected by their peers, is financially and intellectually rewarding, and contains sufficient opportunities for advancement.

(8) Teacher loan forgiveness gives high-poverty schools an effective incentive for recruiting and retaining much-needed high quality teachers.

(9) Loan forgiveness for high-need teachers, including special education teachers, can be a critical link in increasing the supply of these essential educators.

(b) **PURPOSE.**—The purpose of this Act is to encourage individuals to enter and continue in the teaching profession in order to ensure that high quality teachers are recruited and retained in areas where they are most needed so students attending school in such areas receive a quality education.

SEC. 3. EXPANDED LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS.

(a) PROGRAM.—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Education (in this section referred to as the “Secretary”) shall carry out a program of assuming the obligation to repay, pursuant to subsection (c), a loan made, insured, or guaranteed under part B of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 or part D of such title (excluding loans made under sections 428B and 428C of such Act or comparable loans made under part D of such title) for any borrower who—

(A) is a new teacher;

(B)(i) is employed, for 3 consecutive complete school years, as a full-time teacher in a school that qualifies under section 465(a)(2)(A) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087ee(a)(2)(A)) for loan cancellation for a recipient of a loan under part E of title IV of such Act who teaches in such schools; or

(ii) is employed, for 3 consecutive complete school years, as a full-time special education teacher, or as a full-time teacher of special needs children;

(C) satisfies the requirements of subsection (d); and

(D) is not in default on a loan for which the borrower seeks forgiveness.

(2) AWARD BASIS; PRIORITY.—

(A) **AWARD BASIS.**—Subject to subparagraph (B), loan repayment under this section shall be on a first-come, first-serve basis and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(B) **PRIORITY.**—The Secretary shall give priority in providing loan repayment under this section for a fiscal year to student borrowers who received loan repayment under this section for the preceding fiscal year.

(3) **REGULATIONS.**—The Secretary is authorized to prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.

(b) LOAN REPAYMENT.—

(1) **ELIGIBLE AMOUNT.**—The amount the Secretary may repay on behalf of any individual under this section shall not exceed—

(A) the sum of the principal amounts outstanding (not to exceed \$5,000) of the individual's qualifying loans at the end of 3 consecutive complete school years of service described in subsection (a)(1)(B);

(B) an additional portion of such sum (not to exceed \$7,500) at the end of each of the next 2 consecutive complete school years of such service; and

(C) a total of not more than \$20,000.

(2) **CONSTRUCTION.**—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize the refunding of any repayment of a loan made under part B or D of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

(3) **INTEREST.**—If a portion of a loan is repaid by the Secretary under this section for any year, the proportionate amount of interest on such loan which accrues for such year shall be repaid by the Secretary.

(c) **REPAYMENT TO ELIGIBLE LENDERS.**—The Secretary shall pay to each eligible lender or holder for each fiscal year an amount equal to the aggregate amount of loans which are subject to repayment pursuant to this section for such year.

(d) APPLICATION FOR REPAYMENT.—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Each eligible individual desiring loan repayment under this section shall submit a complete and accurate application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(2) **YEARS OF SERVICE.**—An eligible individual may apply for loan repayment under this section after completing the required number of years of qualifying employment.

(3) **FULLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY OR SECONDARY SCHOOLS.**—An application for loan repayment under this section shall include such information as is necessary to demonstrate that the applicant—

(A) if teaching in a public elementary, middle, or secondary school (other than as a teacher in a public charter school), has obtained State certification as a teacher (including certification obtained through alternative routes to certification) or passed the State teacher licensing exam and holds a license to teach in such State; and

(B) if teaching in—

(i) a public elementary school, holds a bachelor's degree and demonstrates knowledge and teaching skills in each of the subject areas in which he or she provides instruction; or

(ii) a public middle or secondary school, holds a bachelor's degree and demonstrates a high level of competency in all subject areas in which he or she teaches through—

(I) a high level of performance on a rigorous State or local academic subject areas test; or

(II) completion of an academic major in each of the subject areas in which he or she provides instruction.

(4) **TEACHERS IN NONPROFIT PRIVATE ELEMENTARY OR SECONDARY SCHOOLS OR CHARTER SCHOOLS.**—In the case of an applicant who is teaching in a nonprofit private elementary or secondary school, or in a public charter school, an application for loan repayment under this section shall include such information as is necessary to demonstrate that the applicant has knowledge and teaching skills in each of the subject areas in which he or she provides instruction, as certified by the chief administrative officer of the school.

(e) **TREATMENT OF CONSOLIDATION LOANS.**—A loan amount for a consolidation loan made under section 428C of the Higher Education Act of 1965, or a Federal Direct Consolidation Loan made under part D of title IV of such Act, may be a qualified loan amount for the purpose of this section only to the extent that such loan amount was used by a borrower who otherwise meets the requirements of this section to repay—

(1) a loan made under section 428 or 428H of such Act; or

(2) a Federal Direct Stafford Loan, or a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, made under part D of title IV of such Act.

(f) ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY PROVISIONS.—

(1) **CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY.**—Any teacher who performs service in a school that—

(A) meets the requirements of subsection (a)(1)(B) in any year during such service; and

(B) in a subsequent year fails to meet the requirements of such subsection, may continue to teach in such school and shall be eligible for loan forgiveness pursuant to subsection (a).

(2) **PREVENTION OF DOUBLE BENEFITS.**—No borrower may, for the same service, receive a benefit under both this section and subtitle D of title I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12571 et seq.).

(3) **DEFINITION OF NEW TEACHER.**—The term “new teacher” means an individual who has not previously been employed as a teacher in an elementary or secondary school prior to August 1, 2001, excluding employment while engaged in student teaching service or comparable activity that is part of a preservice education program.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2001 and for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 5034.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5034, the Quality Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act of 2000, and I thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), who has worked diligently on our committee for many years to try to ensure that we have quality teachers in every classroom throughout the United States.

It has been well noted that schools will need to hire 2 million new teachers in the next decade in order to accommodate growing enrollments and to offset the projected increase in teacher retirements. But it is more than just hiring more teachers. At the same time schools are compelled to hire the best teachers. Parents, business leaders, and the general public are all demanding more from our Nation's schools.

However, as we have heard through the course of many hearings held by the Committee on Education and the Workforce, finding and retaining quality teachers has become more and more difficult, especially in light of the

many other opportunities available to potential teachers in today's marketplace.

A front page New York Times article on August 24 underscores the difficulty facing many schools: "A growing number of States and school districts are short-circuiting the usual route to teacher certification with their own crash courses that put new teachers in the classroom after as little as three weeks. Officials say they are driven by a severe teacher shortage."

In response, many schools are implementing innovative solutions. Last week during a hearing on this issue in our committee, we had the opportunity to hear from Micheline J. Bendotti, executive director from the Arizona Teacher Advancement Program. This program is being implemented in several schools across Arizona and provides teachers with market-driven compensation, multiple career paths, and performance-based accountability, along with high quality ongoing applied professional development.

For our part, Republicans in Congress are assisting States and local school districts to meet the challenges of a competitive marketplace. Through initiatives such as the House-passed Teacher Empowerment Act, we have expanded the flexibility of current education programs to allow more schools to have the Federal resources necessary to carry out these types of innovative programs.

Additionally, we are providing assistance targeted directly to prospective teachers through student loan forgiveness. Specifically, under the Higher Education Amendments of 1998, we established a program for qualified teachers who commit to teaching in a low-income school for 5 years. The program is only available for new student loan borrowers, and the total amount of loan forgiveness is limited to \$5,000 per student.

The fact is teacher loan forgiveness can be a highly successful incentive for encouraging some of our best and brightest graduates to enter the teacher profession. Teacher loan forgiveness also enjoys wide public support, as evidenced by a 1998 Lou Harris poll, which found a majority of Americans favored providing such assistance to teachers. Business groups have also been outspoken on the need for teacher loan forgiveness.

For example, the California Business for Education Excellence has as one of its top priorities to support expanding teacher loan forgiveness programs. Specifically, they believe the amount and rate of loan forgiveness should be accelerated in order to recruit and retain teachers for hard-to-fill openings.

That is exactly what has been done under legislation passed by the Committee on Education and the Workforce earlier this year. Specifically, H.R. 4402, the Training and Education for

American Workers Act of 2000, directs 25 percent of the fees collected through H-1B visa applications to be used for new student loan forgiveness programs to attract more math, science and reading teachers who agree to teach for 5 years. Benefits under this program are in addition to any benefits a student may receive under programs established as part of the Higher Education Act Amendments.

H.R. 5034, the legislation we are considering today, builds upon both of the other teacher loan forgiveness programs. This important initiative also expands upon the current programs by not limiting forgiveness to just new borrowers.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentleman from South Carolina for working so hard on this important legislation. He has been a leader and an advocate for quality teaching in the years he has served on the committee. I encourage all Members to support its passage.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to give management duties on this bill to my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank my colleague from California and rise in support of H.R. 5034.

As my friend and colleague from Pennsylvania mentioned, this bill of our colleague from South Carolina provides up to \$20,000 in student loan forgiveness to fully qualified teachers teaching in high-need schools and districts. I certainly view loan forgiveness as one of a number of strategies to ensure that we have enough highly qualified teachers, especially in the critical areas of science and math.

This bill expands upon a Democratic initiative included under Title IV of the Higher Education Act during the last reauthorization that guarantees \$5,000 in student loan forgiveness to any teacher who teaches in a high-need school for a period of 5 years. Now, \$20,000 is obviously a more powerful incentive than \$5,000; and given the looming teacher shortage, high-need schools and districts will need all the help they can get in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers, and I applaud the gentleman from South Carolina for his interest in improving and expanding the existing program.

I would be remiss, however, if I failed to mention some of my concerns about this legislation. For although I am disappointed that Democratic offers to

work with our friends on the other side of the aisle to improve this legislation before it came to the floor were rebuffed, it is still my hope that some of my concerns and some of the concerns of my colleagues can be remedied should this bill be taken up in the Senate.

To begin with, the bill is written in such a way that it is really unclear as to the relationship between this loan forgiveness program and the existing loan forgiveness program. I worry this could be confusing for students and school officials. We need to simplify student aid, not make it more complicated.

In addition, funding for this program does not kick in until 3 years after the date of enactment, meaning that teachers could not benefit from it, as I understand it, until 2004. We are losing teachers to more lucrative professions today, and will in 2001 and 2002 and 2003. If we want to keep these talented individuals in the classroom, it seems to me prudent to provide them with loan forgiveness today.

And perhaps most important, funding for this program is discretionary rather than mandatory, as is Title IV of the Higher Education Act. So depending on the spirit and generosity of the appropriators 3 years from now, although I presume we will have generous appropriators 3 years from now, but depending on that spirit of generosity, some teachers might benefit while others, though equally qualified, might not. In fact, should the appropriators decide not to fund the program at all, no one will benefit, and we will be no closer to addressing the teacher shortage than we are today.

So I would like to work with my colleague to see if there is some way we can ensure that all eligible teachers can benefit from this valuable program. After all, his intention, I am sure, is to provide an incentive that will be meaningful to recruit and to encourage teachers.

Finally, I feel I must make one last point. For although it is not directly related to this bill, I think it is an essential part of this debate. We will not be able truly to address the problem of poor teacher recruitment and retention rates, particularly in high-need urban and rural communities, until we improve conditions faced by teachers in the classroom. For no matter how tempting the monetary incentive, good teachers will be unlikely to remain in the classroom if they are overcrowded, lacking supplies, and have buildings falling down around them.

However, despite all this, I believe that H.R. 5034 is a good first step, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), author of the

legislation and a valuable member of the committee.

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Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, before we start discussing the bill, I would like to offer a debt of gratitude to my colleagues on the other side for allowing this bill to go forward. And we can make it better, I am sure. But I have a few points that were mentioned.

This bill is building on existing programs that our Committee on Education and the Workforce in a bipartisan fashion passed a couple years ago. There is a \$5,000 student loan forgiveness program in existence today if they will go into teaching in a Title I school.

What does that mean? A Title I school is a school where 30 percent of the students are at the poverty level or below. That is usually a rural poor school, an urban poor school, the places that is very hard to recruit.

As the chairman said, there is going to be a two-million person teacher shortage facing this Nation. And how do we get the best and the brightest into the teaching profession and how do we get them into the hardest-to-recruit area, rural poor, urban poor? We give them a signing bonus.

But the law that exists today has the same requirement as this bill. We just do not want to get bodies into the classroom. We want to have quality teachers in the classroom. Under the current program, they cannot get any loan forgiveness until they teach 3 years.

That is exactly what this bill does. But what it does is it goes beyond \$5,000. It will allow a person who will go into teaching in a Title I school, a hard-to-recruit area, if they will teach for 3 years in the area that they major in in college, math teachers teaching math, science teachers teaching science, if they will go into this school district and keep their certification up, in the fourth and fifth and sixth year of their career, we will forgive their student loan up to \$17,750 in additional loan forgiveness.

And it is a discretionary program. We worked hard to try to find the offset. But let me just assure my colleague this, that the projections are that we will recruit 35,000 new teachers a year if we pass this bill.

I would argue that every Member of this body, Republicans and Democrats, appropriators, non-appropriators, will put money into this program if it is bringing in the best and the brightest in areas that are hard to recruit under today's standards.

A Newsweek article called "Teachers Wanted" is a great expose of what communities are doing all over the country to try to get people in the teaching profession to fill these voids in the classroom. But we go one step further. We just do not want bodies. We want

people committed to the teaching profession to keep their certifications up and have a commitment to these schools. And once that commitment is shown, we are going to meet them more than halfway.

The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) and the gentleman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ), I really appreciate them joining with us to get this bill out of the House. And if we can make it better, we will.

But the bottom line is that there are a lot of folks getting ready to decide what career to choose and they want to go into teaching, and one of the biggest problems they face as a college graduate is a big student loan. The average is almost \$17,000 now.

What we are saying, in a bipartisan fashion, is, if they will make a commitment to teaching and they will keep their certifications up and they will do a good job, we will take that debt away from them in a very quick period of time. I think people are going to respond in droves.

The article called "Teachers Wanted," I would just like to let the people of the United States know that we disagree a lot in this body and we have different views of what the Federal Government should do in education. But this is a good day. We are approaching the end of a contentious Congress, but we are coming together as Republicans and Democrats and we are putting into place a program that will help real people in a real way to put a new generation of teachers in classrooms where it is very hard to recruit. And this applies to anybody with a student loan that is willing to go into a Title I school.

Let me mention one other facet about this bill. The special education teachers are included. I would like to thank my colleague the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT). We all know how hard it is to get people to go into special ed. So if they are a special-ed teacher, regardless of the school district they go to, we will help forgive their student loan if they will stay in there and help the kids.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman for the leadership he has shown in allowing this bill to come to the floor and my colleagues on the Democratic side of the aisle in the Committee on Education and the Workforce. This is a good day for the committee. I think it is a good day for the Congress, and I urge support of this bill.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BURR).

Mr. BURR of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand before this House today in support of my good friend the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and in support of his legislation that would expand the current loan forgiveness program for teachers in high poverty schools.

As chief architect of the original program in 1998, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) is a tremendous advocate for teachers. I appreciate his work on this behalf.

I am increasingly concerned about the state of our Nation's education system, more specifically with regard to the quality of teaching. Just today, there are newspaper reports about teacher turnover in North Carolina schools.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleagues that the news is not good and it is getting worse. According to the North Carolina Department of Instruction, last year's teacher turnover rate was 13.59 percent, up from 13.4 in 1999 and 12.3 percent in 1998. This means that over 12,000 out of 89,000 teachers in North Carolina left their job for one reason or another.

Perhaps a more startling figure is that about 30 percent of these teachers had tenure. While these numbers are unsettling, I must share with my colleagues that North Carolina is making improvements. We have the most National Board Certified teachers in the country. We are recognized as one of the top two States in improving teaching. North Carolina has made the most gains on SAT test scores, more than any other State in the last 10 years.

And finally, the National Education Goals Panel said that North Carolina is one of the top States in business and community support for public education.

Even with this outstanding recognition, I think that we can all agree that it just is not enough. If North Carolina is making such improvements and our numbers are this high, I shudder to look at the States who have higher turnover rates. We must try harder, we must work harder to give our children an education that will provide them with the tools necessary to make solid choices in their lives.

Sadly, many of our students are not able to make these choices. I believe that we can change that. In North Carolina, teachers in 1,459 elementary and secondary schools are eligible for loan forgiveness under the current program. Of this number, teachers in 178 schools in and around my district are eligible.

An especially attractive piece of this package is that all special education teachers are eligible for loan cancellation under the Graham bill. I am pleased that my district's most at-risk schools have a program to help them attract quality teachers, and I think this loan forgiveness program is a good foundation for us to build upon.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation's most precious resource is our children. I believe that this bill gives our children, especially our disadvantaged children, the chance to have a better education.

When I spoke on the floor yesterday about the 25th anniversary of the IDEA bill, I reminded my colleagues that every student has a right to free public education. I believe that we have secured access to education. Loan forgiveness for qualified teachers brings us one step closer to improving quality in the classroom.

To close, it seems that the latest trend in Washington is to see who can buy the most teachers or who can spend the most on education. I cannot stand by and watch Congress and the President pour billions into the Title I program and cross their fingers any longer and hope that education gets better and student achievement goes up. I think we can do better. We will do better.

We need to give teachers a reason to go to Title I schools and invest their time, their energy and their talents. Support this bill, and we are well on the way.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2¼ minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) another important new member on our committee.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Quality Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act. I am a cosponsor of this legislation.

I have had the good fortune to work with my good friend the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) on it. I want to emphasize a specific part of the bill which has already been mentioned.

This bill would allow the loan forgiveness program to all teachers who choose to go into the special education field regardless of teaching location.

The field of special education faces special challenges. There is not only a shortage of special-ed teachers, but some teachers in the field are not qualified.

Additionally, special education teachers are burdened by the need to comply with complex Federal laws and paperwork requirements in the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act.

While the law is filled with good intentions, it is widely acknowledged to be a complicated process which leaves less time for teachers to go about the business of teaching. Teachers are discouraged by the paperwork requirements and spend hours working on checklists rather than lesson plans. They do this because they fear lawsuits if somehow they fall short of a dotting an "I" or crossing a "T."

Local school districts must pay for this underfunded mandate for special education, which strains their budget. This bill does its part in a small way by giving local school districts an incentive to attract special-ed teachers.

If teachers are qualified, they can receive loan forgiveness over time if they teach in the special-ed field. While the number of special-ed students is rising, the number of teachers qualified to teach special-ed kids is not keeping pace with demand. Each year there is a chronic shortage of fully certified special-ed teachers, averaging about 27,000 per year. While the demand is ever present, institutions of higher education are graduating fewer teachers qualified in special ed.

Mr. Speaker, the Quality Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act is one step we can take to help local school districts by recruiting qualified teachers to enter and remain in the special education field.

I thank my colleague for his willingness to craft this legislation in such a way that addresses the important need for special education teachers across the country.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to repeat that we support this bill. It does need some perfecting, but it gets at the heart of what we must address in education.

Teachers are indeed the key. Teachers are the key for special education. Teachers are the key for languages. Teachers are the key for science and math.

In fact, tomorrow the Glen Commission, the National Commission on the Teaching of Mathematics and Science, will be issuing our report; and that will also highlight the need to recruit good teachers, to provide them training before they go in, mentoring as they enter their field, and life-long professional development.

Loan forgiveness is part of the number of steps that we must take in order to have the kind of teaching that we need to give our students the education they need for fulfilling lives in the 21st century.

We must recruit teachers. Loan forgiveness will help with that. But we also must look at the environment where they will teach, the class sizes, the facilities, and we must make sure that the environment provides an atmosphere of continuous improvement and professional development. With that, we can find the teachers we need, train them, and give our students the education they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 2200

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER), a seasoned, important member of our committee.

Mr. SOUDER. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I am a proud conservative cosponsor of the gentleman from

South Carolina's bill to provide loan forgiveness to teachers in title I schools and special ed. Sometimes, just once in a while, our liberal friends accuse conservatives of not caring about improving education because we do not favor a Federal takeover in education. In fact, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING), the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), and I were leaders in the fight against national testing standards. We fought against the national curriculum and national teaching standards. But the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING) has committed his entire career to trying to provide better quality with local control, and this bill is yet another example.

We Republicans say everyone should compete. Yet we do not believe in guaranteeing absolute equality. Parents' education differs, their income differs, some kids are going to have computers at home, some kids are going to have parents who can teach. There is not just a whole lot we can do about that. But we do believe that there ought to be basic opportunities for all kids in America. And so we support title I and we support IDEA. The chairman has been a leader in Even Start, in Head Start. We have had many such bills.

This bill combines many of the principles that we as conservatives believe are valuable in trying to help low-income students. It does it with incentives, not mandates. It does not tell people what they actually have to do; it forgives their loans and gives them the flexibility; and it requires them to serve first. Often we give money to somebody, and they may or may not serve. In this case if they serve the 3 years, then they get 3 years forgiven; 4 years, then they get more forgiven the fifth year. If we give the money up front, we find that many times in other programs where we have done this we may or may not get people to serve, and we may battle over that forgiveness. That is a conservative principle.

We also say that when you give it to an individual student who then goes and teaches, it does not come with the Federal strings. It gives the teachers the flexibility to determine what they are going to do, special ed or a title I school; it gives the school the flexibility without the strings that come from many of this administration's proposals. When people ask what conservatives are doing to help those who are hurting, to those who are behind, those who potentially can be left behind, this is yet one more example of what this Congress has done. It is a small step, but it is an important step.

My daughter is currently teaching at a title I school. It is a new job. She has found that as opposed to a suburban school she gets less money to help in the classroom. Fewer of the parents show up. It is hard even to get as many parents to participate in bringing refreshments for the kids because they

do not have the income. We need to do some special steps in America to make sure that those who are college graduates even though we support alternative certification, even though we support creative ways to fill those gaps, we need creative ways like the gentleman from South Carolina's bill to encourage our young people in college today to take at least part of their career, many of whom will then fall in love with these kids who so much need their help to work in our title I and special ed programs.

I commend the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING); I commend the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) for his great work and add my enthusiastic support to this bill.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Quality Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act.

Just this week, Newsweek's cover story asks "Who will teach our kids?" Since one half of all teachers in America are slated to retire by 2010, this is a question on the minds of millions of families across this country.

In my home State of California, we are already feeling the teacher crunch where as a result of the State's class size reduction program, there are 35,000 uncertified teachers in our classrooms.

Over the past two years, the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education, Training, and Life-long Learning (which I serve as Chairman and the bill's sponsor, LINDSAY GRAHAM, serves as vice chairman) has devoted substantial time and effort toward the issue of teacher quality and recruitment.

We have held numerous hearings and have had an active hand in shaping legislative proposals aimed at getting teachers into our classrooms.

Those proposals include:

The teacher quality enhancement grants—established in the higher education amendments of 1998;

Language in H.R. 2, the "Education Options" Act to boost the qualifications of the 180,000 teachers and paraprofessionals who teach in our Nation's poorest school districts;

The Tech-for-Success Program in H.R. 4141 to help better prepare teachers in how best to use technology to improve student academic achievement;

The Bipartisan Teacher Empowerment Act to enable schools to focus on a host of initiatives including bonus and merit pay, tenure reform, teacher mentoring programs, and professional development; and

Increased flexibility in the "100,000 New Teachers" Program so that schools experiencing a high percentage of uncertified teachers can use funds to focus on boosting teacher training as opposed to hiring additional teachers.

H.R. 5034 builds on these significant efforts by expanding another important provision in the higher education amendments—loan forgiveness for teachers.

This legislation enhances loan forgiveness by increasing the number of those qualified for the program while retaining the current requirements so that we not only get qualified

teachers into the classroom but keep them there.

The bill also addresses the need across the country for special education teachers by granting them loan forgiveness no matter where they teach.

To conclude, in order to combat the shortage of teachers, we must continue to look at innovative ways to motivate thousands to come into the teaching profession.

The new loan forgiveness provided under H.R. 5034 is one such incentive and, as such, I urge all my colleagues to support this important legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5034.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING ALL POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST MOTION TO CONCUR IN SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 4365, CHILDREN'S HEALTH ACT OF 2000

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio (during consideration of H.R. 5034) from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-901) on the resolution (H. Res. 594) providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 4365) to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to children's health, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 6(a) OF RULE XIII WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio (during consideration of H.R. 5034) from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-902) on the resolution (H. Res. 595) waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

CONGRATULATING HOME EDUCATORS AND HOME SCHOOLED STUDENTS

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 578) congratulating home educators and home schooled students across the Nation for their ongoing contributions to education and for the role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for this Nation, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 578

Whereas the United States is committed to excellence in education and to strengthening the family;

Whereas parental choice and involvement are important to excellence in education;

Whereas parents have a fundamental right to direct the education and upbringing of their children;

Whereas home schooling families contribute significantly to cultural diversity, which is important to a healthy society;

Whereas home education allows families the opportunity to provide their children a sound academic education integrated with high ethical standards taught within a safe and secure environment;

Whereas home education has been a major part of American education and culture since the Nation's inception and demonstrates the American ideals of innovation, entrepreneurship, and individual responsibility;

Whereas home education was proven successful in the lives of George Washington, Patrick Henry, John Quincy Adams, John Marshall, Robert E. Lee, Booker T. Washington, Thomas Edison, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Mark Twain, John Singleton Copley, William Carey, Phyllis Wheatley, and Andrew Carnegie, who were each home schooled;

Whereas today the United States has a significant number of parents who teach a total of approximately 1,700,000 home schooled students, thus saving several billion dollars on public education each year;

Whereas home schooled students exhibit self-confidence and good citizenship and are fully prepared academically and socially to meet the challenges of today's society;

Whereas scores of contemporary studies, including a 1999 University of Maryland analysis of the nationally recognized Iowa Test of Basic Skills, confirm that children who are educated at home perform exceptionally well on nationally normed achievement tests, and such performance is also demonstrated by the fact that home schooled students scored well above the national average on the 2000 SAT and the 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000 ACT;

Whereas studies demonstrate that home schooled students excel in college, with the grade point average of home schooled students exceeding the college average;

Whereas home schooled students continue to exhibit excellence in academic competitions, as demonstrated by home schooled students finishing first, second, and third in the 2000 Scripps-Howard National Spelling Bee and by a home schooled student finishing second in the 2000 National Geography Bee sponsored by the National Geographic Society; and

Whereas National Home Education Week, beginning on October 1, 2000, and ending on October 7, 2000, furthers the goal of honoring home educators and home schooled students for their efforts to improve the quality of education in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) congratulates home educators and home schooled students across the Nation for their ongoing contributions to education and for the role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for the Nation;

(2) honors home educators and home schooled students for their efforts to improve the quality of education in the United States; and